2002-Eckhart Tolle Companion to Power of Now Audio Tape

[Speaker 2] (0:13 - 0:26)

Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body with the author of The Power of Now, Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (0:41 - 1:52:29)

It seems almost paradoxical we are going to spend some time together tonight in order to explore a dimension of consciousness that is beyond time. We are spending time together to move more deeply into the present moment and to experience a dimension of consciousness that opens up when your attention is completely present in this moment. And there are two levels of teaching, if you call it that, it's not really teaching.

There are the words and there are the silent spaces in between the words. Usually people don't pay attention to the silent spaces between words and in our civilization there actually aren't many silent spaces anymore. In your head there may be an almost continuous dialogue unless you are beginning to encounter within yourself a dimension of stillness.

What happens when you pay attention to a gap between sentences or between words, the silent space, immediately there is some stillness inside you because it's only through the stillness that you can listen to the silence, to become aware of the silence, of the gaps. Now what does stillness mean? That's just a word, we could use other words, I sometimes use the word presence to describe this state of consciousness that is now emerging collectively on this planet, although at the moment only relatively few people are able to access it, but there is a state of consciousness that is emerging on the planet that is very different from the consciousness that has been dominant throughout human history and compared to that new state of consciousness that is emerging, a state that has been pointed to by many teachers in the past but has always been misinterpreted, the original purity of all those teachings has been misinterpreted by the human mind and completely misunderstood. So what does it mean, stillness? The human mind says stillness isn't interesting enough, it's a state of consciousness that is free of thought and yet you're fully alert, fully awake, fully present.

It doesn't mean you will never think again, thought will come in again, but you will always be rooted in that state as you learn to live in that state and this state emerges more fully and us sitting here together this evening, what's really happening beyond the personal level is that this state of consciousness here is emerging. On a personal level it might look as if I were telling you useful things, how to live free of problems, free of suffering, free of conflict, but it goes far beyond the personal level and the main, the essence of what I speak about and point to, you cannot actually understand through the mind because the essence is precisely beyond the mind. And by mind I mean thought

activity, mental noise.

Most humans are trapped in that continuous mental noise and identify with the mental noise as themselves, as me, and there's a continuous monologue or dialogue going on in the head and that grows already when young children start to develop it. And gradually you identify with the mental noise, an image arises as this is, that's me, and you're completely trapped in this continuous stream of incessant thinking and that is, your sense of self, of me, gets identified with that, so my problems, my suffering, what about me, what's going to happen to me, it's a mental image of a sense of self that is never really at ease, never feels really at home, is always trying to get somewhere but never quite gets there. Many times it thinks it's got there but then realizes, oh no, I'm not there. It tries to get to some state, some relief, some state of happiness or fulfillment, completion, perfection, in whatever way, no matter, the bank robber is trying to get there in some way but he's robbing a bank in order to get the money because he believes that the money will eventually enable him to feel a more intense aliveness, a more deeply rooted sense of self, of identity, and that's of course an illusion, but even the spiritual person who is practicing certain techniques for years is trying to get somewhere, a state of perfection, a future, this mind-made sense of self is always reaching out to the future because it believes there's salvation there somewhere for me, at some point in the future I'm going to make it, whether the making it is becoming wealthy or the making it is becoming a spiritual master or enlightened, basically it's the same mind structure still at work.

So to be condemned to an almost continuous state of unease, something's never quite right, I need to get somewhere, this moment is never quite right, or very, very rarely, only when a desire has just been fulfilled there's a moment of relief and then immediately something else arises. That's something to observe in oneself, that state of unease with what is the present moment, that's part of the old consciousness, it's embedded in the very structure of the human mind, so no matter what you do you can't get rid of it on the level of mind, and then gradually all this mental noise becomes self-serving, it simply is there to, it reinforces itself, you go round in vicious circles, and all we're doing here is allowing a deeper dimension of consciousness to emerge because it wants to emerge, otherwise there wouldn't be much chance, you can't make it happen, but you can allow it to happen. The very fulfilment of your existence as a human being on this planet is the flowering of consciousness, stepping out of the conditioned self, the conditioned mind, all the mental noise is conditioned by the past, stepping out of conditioned sense of self, my history, my story, me, equating your sense of identity with your story, your history, all that's the conditioned, and it is possible to step out of that, and what is there beyond the conditioned little me, that little sense of self derived from the past, and that needs the future for its fulfilment, and at the same time feels threatened by the future, because the future is going to kill it, so it's a double-edged sword that continues running towards the future away from this moment, seeking

fulfilment, at some future moment I'm going to get there, but at the same time feel deep down the future is also going to kill me. So humans live between these two fear and desire movements, and for most people all their motivations, all their actions arise either out of fear or desire, they're all connected with future, and that also is embedded in the very structure of the human mind. It's interesting to observe it in oneself, even to observe that you're not at ease in this moment, even to observe that just ten seconds ago you were thinking about your dinner tonight, or the problem that you're going to have to face tomorrow, even to observe that is already the beginning of another consciousness emerging.

If you can observe what the mind is doing, that is not part of the mind, you're not judging it, you're simply watching that. That is the stillness emerging in you, that is the dimension of consciousness that is deeper than the mind, vaster, of infinite potential, it contains infinite vast potential, and once you access that, you will find it amazing that humans have lived for thousands of years trapped in a sense of self that was so limited to see themselves as a little person with a little history and a little future, and to be trapped in that sense of self is such an illusion, and it's so, it's a prison. So just to watch, even at this moment, is, am I at ease, or is there some part of me that wants to be somewhere else?

Do I want to be in the future, or am I trying to get away from this moment? That's always, that is the essence of the old state of consciousness, and when you observe it, that's the beginning of a new consciousness. It's sometimes called the witnessing consciousness.

You observe what the mind is doing, so you're not totally trapped in it. And that is only the beginning, that is only the beginning, and then it emerges more deeply, more fully, as the state of stillness, which you may get glimpses of even here, and perhaps at this moment, when the mind is not moving anymore. You're alert, completely present, completely open to the aliveness of this moment.

And most humans are completely, totally unaware of that, that the fact that there is an infinite source potential for aliveness concealed in what looks like so insignificant to the mind, and that's this moment. It's like the atom, the tiniest of things contains vast energy, once it opens up. So the very life energy, the energy that sustains the whole universe, you can have access to it through the little doorway that opens up when your attention moves into this moment.

And it always means you become very alert, very present. That's stillness. Stillness, alertness, presence, they're all one.

So stillness, don't misinterpret stillness as meaning you're going off to sleep, or the kind of stillness you have when after a few drinks you might drift off a bit in life, you can't remember your problems, so you feel a little bit better. But even drink can sometimes

mean, people sometimes drink to get rid for a little while of the torture of their mind, telling them what their problems are, the problematic sense of self, the me. So they drink, and for a moment they don't remember their problems, but of course there's a price to pay, because you go, there's a lowering of consciousness, so you go lower towards the vegetable realm.

And what we are doing, we are not moving in that direction here. It's fine for a vegetable, plant life has unbelievable beauty and aliveness to it, and in many ways it's more enlightened than humans, because it doesn't inhabit a world of problems. This flower has no problems, and even by the time it comes to die, it's not a problem, it just dies.

And yet there is an aliveness there, and it's also an expression of consciousness, a beautiful expression of the divine consciousness, just as you are. So we are moving beyond thinking to a more awake state, a more alert state, a more present state, compared to which the thinking state is a dream-like state. To be immersed in thinking, this mental dialogue, you're only peripherally aware of your surroundings, because you might be walking in the woods, in the most beautiful surroundings, but you're thinking about your problems, my problems, what about me?

You're not there. If then something happened that would give you a little shock, you would suddenly, for a moment, enter a state that is present and alert. If you were suddenly confronted with a bear, you would come out of your thinking state, out of your problems, and there would be the bear.

And that's not a problem. It's a situation that requires, probably, some action. Either you move away, or you make a noise, whatever.

But the difference between that state is so, and this is a state that can happen to some humans accidentally in certain situations. You're driving, and suddenly something goes wrong, and you know an accident is imminent in two or three seconds. And you've been driving for two hours, immersed in a world of problems, stress, this, that, to deal with, and suddenly all that drops away.

This is an example when the state of consciousness that I'm pointing to emerges accidentally, and many people have reported they knew an accident was inevitable within two or three seconds, or five seconds, and they suddenly found themselves in an inner state of extreme calm and serenity, and they were totally there, totally alert, all fear had left, and later they survived to tell about it. Said, this was amazing, how could this be, because it's such a dangerous situation, and I felt so serene suddenly. There are many reports, many similar examples.

So this state of consciousness can sometimes emerge briefly, usually, accidentally. Some people seek it out through dangerous activities. It's the only way they can be free of the

burden of their mind, the burden of the personality, of the me, the burden of this problematic me that they think that's their reality, because when they're climbing up the wall of the mountain, they can't think about that.

They have to be present, totally alert in the now. But when they come down, they get back in their car, they re-enter the world of problems. So they can't be in the state, they think they need to be engaged in that activity to be in that state, but that is not the case.

You can choose that state now, if you're sitting here. What I'm saying now might not yet apply to all humanity, but if you're sitting here, there's enough consciousness in you to choose a state that is free of the problem-making mind, and to realize when you enter the now, that there is no problem ever in this moment. There may be a situation that you need to deal with, that is never a problem.

Anything that comes into the now, you may need to take action, do this or that, and you do it. It arises out of that state of consciousness, of presence. But dwelling mentally on situations, invest in the situations with a sense of me, self, and going around in circles, lying in bed at night, sleepless, and wherever you go, you can't stop this machine, the noise machine in the head, because you don't remember where the button, the off switch is.

That is torture. The most wonderful realization is that in the state of consciousness that I call presence, there are no problems. Perhaps challenges, but they never turn into problems.

If you cannot take action, everybody in this room has certain, is involved in a certain life situation. Some better than others. Some life situations are relatively good and comfortable.

Other life situations may be problematic. There may be shortage of money, there may be health problems, there may be relationship problems, work, and many kinds of completely fictitious problems created by the mind, what if this happens, or that happens, or I lose this, or I don't get that, or he leaves me, or she leaves me. So another level of problems is total fiction.

It comes about through the incessant mental noise. It's a very radical reversal of the normal way to live. Take your attention, whenever you think you can't stand, you have problems anymore, and it's getting too much, and you wake up in the morning and say, oh, not another day.

No human is meant to live like that, waking up in the morning and saying, I can't face another day. And nor in nature, that doesn't happen. The flower too, when the sun rises, the flower opens up, because it responds to the sun, and no flower has ever said, I can't

face another day.

No animal has ever said, I can't face another day, except perhaps animals that are suffering deeply because of what humans have done to them. But no animal in the wild would, an animal wakes up, and a plant, a flower wakes up and immediately is in a state of aliveness. And you can see it.

Jesus talked about it when he often would say, look at the flowers. And when he said, look at the flowers, he meant it. He wants you to really look and see the incredible beauty and aliveness.

If you look deeply enough, you will see that they are actually celebrating life. And this is how life is meant to be. Humans are meant to celebrate life too, in a completely different way.

They also are an expression of the divine consciousness. Now we impose our world view also on nature. So whatever world view you have, gets projected.

So humans these days say, the whole of nature is a struggle for survival, because that's their own life, that's their own mind. If you were free of that mindset that says everything is a struggle for survival, you would actually see that most of the time, nature is celebrating life. And the moments of struggle are very short.

Animals mostly live in a state of ease. When they get hungry, they might kill. That's a very brief moment compared to most of their existence.

So to carry this burden of problems, which is the mind, which is the mind, which gets heavier as people grow older, often the burden increases. Past gets heavier and heavier inside. You carry a heavier and heavier burden of past.

But even young people, young people carry a heavy burden of future. And gradually, you can no longer feel life. You can no longer feel the aliveness that is in the very depths of your being, because of the mental noise.

It covers up an incredible deep sense of vitality and aliveness that is life itself. But it's covered up by mental noise. Jesus talked about it.

He said, I want you to have life and more abundant life. I want you to have more abundant life. I want you to have more abundant life.

He didn't mean more abundant consumer goods. He didn't mean more shopping malls. He was not talking about the things in life.

He was talking about life itself, the aliveness of life itself. And if the only place where you can be in touch with that is through the stillness underneath the mental noise, the vibrantly alive stillness presence underneath the mental noise. There you get, because

the stillness is also a feeling of intense aliveness.

That's the place where you are connected with something much vaster than the little me. When you touch that incredible sense of aliveness, the only place in time where you can do that is now, when you touch that, a vastness of life is there. And as you have access to that more and more, that begins to be in your life, not just as a glimpse, but for longer periods you dwell in the state of connectedness, as I sometimes call it, connectedness with being, where life feels good.

It feels good to be alive. This is the most simple terms I could, even a child would understand that. It feels good to be alive.

But in that goodness that is life itself, out of the goodness that is life itself, things emerge. Out of the vibrantly alive stillness that is in your very being, things emerge out of that. Thoughts may come suddenly out of it, but they will be creative, new thoughts, not the old gramophone records that you've been thinking about for 10 or 20 years.

Insights, realizations come out of that, because that's the source of all creativity. So you're touching life itself, not the manifest, the life before it becomes something in its original form, or rather no form, the formless life that you are. That is your essence, to be connected with that is to become free of the world, of attachment to the things of the world, of grasping and clinging and needing.

And there's an incredible sense of, you suddenly know how precious you are as that life. No matter whether on the external level, or on the spiritual level, you are an important person, or a non-important person, that's the world telling you you are important, or the world telling you you haven't made it, that has nothing to do with finding that place within yourself where you become free of that, and you no longer believe what the world is telling you. Because after all, the world is insane.

And if you believe it, you believe what an insane world is telling you. If you doubt that the world is insane, pick up a history book, or switch on the news. It may not be 100% insane, but let's say 90%.

So you're allowing an insane world to tell you, either that you are important, and believe that, and a few years later, the same world will tell you that you are no longer important. You've lost your position, and somebody else is chairman of the board now. And you thought that was your identity.

And you might even have to return the American Express Platinum card. And that is painful. If your sense of identity was in that, something that is funny, really, to that person would be very painful.

My God, I'm nobody again. And I thought I was somebody. How can I survive without the Platinum card?

And then somebody else believes it when they tell you, you are no good because you haven't made it in the world. Oh, I failed. Life has treated me unfairly.

I've missed out on life. I never had a chance, or had a chance, but I didn't use it. So the world telling you, the insane world now telling you, you are not important, or you are nobody.

Look who, who is regarded as important in the world. Actors, singers, whatever, politicians. And most of them are miserably unhappy, with a facade of happiness.

And those are the idols of the world. So your sense of self is no longer derived from that. And that's a wonderful liberation.

You don't, what the world is telling you becomes completely irrelevant. Because your aliveness has such depth to it, you know that nobody could take that away from you. And you need nobody's confirmation that your life is incredibly valuable.

And self-esteem, you no longer need to tell you that you are good enough when you are in touch with the very goodness of life itself. Until that it may be helpful to have little affirmations telling you that you are good enough. Then you move beyond.

When you are in touch with the very goodness of life in yourself, then you no longer need mental concepts of who you are. And this is what Jesus meant when he said, I have overcome the world. Not that he had any worldly power.

So that is, that depth of aliveness is here in you at this moment. But you need to be open to that. A very helpful point of entry, and many of you are living it already, is to feel the aliveness that is in every cell of your body at this very moment.

Every cell is vibrant with life throughout your being. And to feel that, to be connected with that. You don't have to, and you'll notice when your attention moves into the body, the inner energy field of the body, I sometimes call it the inner body, but you could also call it the joy body because there is deep joy in that aliveness.

When your attention is there, you're not, the noise suddenly subsides in the head because the attention has moved from the head into your being. And you're then rooted in the now. You're rooted in your being.

And so it's almost as if your whole body were coming to life suddenly. That's what Jesus meant when he said, your whole body will be filled with light. That is the light of consciousness.

And then there's still plenty of consciousness left to perceive the world. As you sit there and feel the aliveness in your being, you're rooted in the now. You're rooted through that, that's the opening, that's the doorway.

You're rooted in being. Everything is an expression of the divine consciousness, one form or another form. Every organ and cell, DNA and so on, has vast intelligence that the human mind could never understand.

Even a thousand years we'll still be exploring how the body works. It's so easy to be connected with an intelligence that is greater than the mind. Simply feel the aliveness of the inner body and you will soon come to a place of, feel there's joy there.

The joy of life itself. And it doesn't depend on what's in your life as the circumstances, because circumstances come and go. They may be negative at the moment, they may be positive at the moment, they rarely remain the same.

If they're positive now, they may be negative next year. There are constant fluctuations out there, but there is a place that is free of that. And people in prison who have written to me are practicing that, and living that, and finding an intense joy and aliveness despite the dreadful conditions of their external circumstances.

So those external circumstances I call that, that's your life situation. Good, bad, indifferent, it changes. You lose things, you gain things.

Life situations continuously fluctuate. And even the greatest success story eventually will move into old age, loss of beauty, or loss of wealth, or loss of the ability to move. On the external level, nothing lasts.

The Buddha discovered that. Everything is impermanent on the external level. And yet there is a place where you're free of those things.

Those things can no longer influence, affect your state of being. So you become free of the world. And it doesn't matter, if you're homeless now, you might think, okay, first I need to find a home, and then I will practice going within and going deeply into the now.

Because there's a fear, which is the mind's conditioning, if I go deeply into the now now, I will be stuck in this now that I don't like, that I'm in now. It's a very subtle thing, a very subtle resistance. I don't like my life circumstances, the mind says, so I'm not going to go into the now, because I don't want to be in the now.

I want to get to the future, and once I get to the future, then I'll go into the now. Perhaps the American Express Platinum Card will take me into the now. And of course the miracle is, you do it now.

No matter what the circumstances of your life are, there's no excuse for not doing it. And the quickest way out of undesirable circumstances, homeless, even prison, penniless, or even physical condition, the quickest way out of that, is to do it now. Is to enter the present moment and connect with the vast aliveness that is there, just waiting for you to touch it.

And then, that vast aliveness, you're not just practicing that when you're sitting still in your room, it's not just a meditation practice, it's a way of being, so you begin to dwell in that state of connectedness, and you will notice how suddenly there's more creativity in your life. There are more insights, realizations of what is the right thing to do. You will wake up and suddenly know, oh, this is what I have to do.

Because they arise out of that state, life itself begins to live through you and move through you. The little person struggling to make a living or to be a success or to make it, is not really needed anymore, the struggling little me. So life itself begins to move through you, and it does it much better than you could ever do, because ultimately you are alive.

By you I mean the fictitious little me in the head. And then, very quickly, life situations actually improve, because you bring to every moment that deep sense of aliveness of being there, and you can honor this moment fully. That means immediately a sense of deep care flows into what you do, all your interactions.

When you're completely there, you give your complete attention to whatever task is at hand, and even if you were in a job that the mind tells you is boring and you want to get out of, the quickest way out of that, and you might have been stuck in it for years, thinking I need to get out of it, is to bring a different state of consciousness to it, giving care even to the tedious things that you have to do and bring that to it.

That is meaning, that means, the resistance to the now suddenly goes. And the resistance to the now is an essential aspect of the conditioned human mind. It is always fighting this moment in one way or another.

No, I don't want to be here. I need to be somewhere else. When the resistance to the now goes, then life can move freely through you.

Then problems disappear. And of course nothing is made into a problem. Challenges still come, but they respond to them in the now.

Out of that sense of presence and aliveness, you see, what can I do about this situation now? And you become still, and then action arises out of that state. No longer the agonizing, oh, me and my problems.

And you never again will wake up in the morning and say, I can't face another day. It's a dreadful condition, but many humans are in that. You will then wake up and you will open your eyes, and the mind is not going to start immediately and tell you what your problems are, so immediately the burden descends on you of, oh, I can't face it anymore.

You wake up and immediately connect with the aliveness that is in every cell of the body and hold that state. It feels good to be alive, and the mind hasn't...why does it feel good to be alive? Because the mind hasn't started up yet and reminded you of your problems.

Because underneath that, it always feels good. Life is always vitally alive and beautiful. And so life becomes a celebration continuously, not a needing to get to some future moment to become happy or become somebody, or to make it.

And the miracle is that everything flows with greater ease then. And you're even likely to be more successful as if it mattered. Because whatever you do in that state is done with care and even love.

You honor the now. You honor life itself. You open your arms to life itself.

That is love. That is a deep sense of care that you give to whatever arises in the now. Yes.

How can life not be cooperative if that is your state of being? And how can life be cooperative if you continuously say, no, I don't want to be here. I want to be somewhere else.

Or even I want to be somebody else. So it's like being closed, resisting the now, denying the now, running away from the now. Anything but this, the mind says.

And then the shift happens. You honor life. Then life can help you.

It's been trying to help for years. You just can't get through. The sun tries to shine.

It doesn't mean you are big and powerful so you can keep out even life. You're not separate from life. If you keep the shutters closed in a room, the sun just won't come in.

It would love to come in. But if you keep the shutters closed, the sun doesn't really mind, but it would love to come in. So that is the state of non-resistance to the present moment.

The most miraculous transformation of consciousness as you enter that state is there. And there's always, as we started off by pointing to the stillness, when you do not resist what is, the incessant mental noise slows down, subsides, huge gaps arise in the mind stream, because almost all the mental noise is continuous resistance. So you open yourself up to just this moment.

That is the ultimate spiritual practice. And nothing could be more simple, and yet it seems so difficult because of the conditioning of the mind. So the sense of power or aliveness that dwells there, this is what they talk about in Trust the word Trust, trusting in life, to have to trust.

It's hard to make yourself trust when your primordial condition is fear, which is the primordial human condition in the mind-identified state. Fear and trust can't go together. Trust is simply the absence of fear.

So you cannot make yourself trust, or even affirmations won't do it. You can even repeat affirmations and put them on your bathroom mirror. I trust in life.

I trust that life is supporting me. But you eventually have to go even beyond the affirmation. And the trust arises naturally where you actually don't need any more affirmations, because you're there, the reality of it is there.

Affirmations are maybe a transitional stage when you haven't quite arrived at the reality of it. Then you say, I'm wealthy, but when you have 50 million in the bank, you can take off the affirmation from your bathroom mirror. It's obvious, you know you're wealthy, you don't need to say it anymore.

Bill Gates doesn't have the affirmation on his bathroom mirror. And that's only external worlds. Now he's not, this is not going to save him, even with that, he cannot buy peace.

But just giving that example to see when you have, when the reality is obvious, and it's there, then you don't need the signpost anymore, because every affirmation is a kind of signpost that points you in the right direction. But there comes a point when the signpost isn't needed anymore, because you have arrived. So the trust, trust, when you feel, you go into the inner body, and then you feel that there's the first very subtle, and then you feel increasingly, more intensely, the power, the aliveness, the stillness, and yet the incredible energy behind that.

And then you know, that is actually, that is most, on the most fundamental level, that's, I am, I am, I am, I am, I am, I am that. I am not the little me in the head. And that is going to, that lives, and acts through you.

That power is there. And when you know yourself as that, that's trust, then you suddenly, trust is your natural state. No longer something you need to figure out how to get there.

Trust is your natural state, so that even the concept trust disappears, because it's all natural, you don't even have a word for it anymore. Many concepts disappear when the reality to which the concept points arrives. The very mental concept of it is not really necessary anymore.

I rarely talk about love, although I did this morning, but I don't talk about it too often. It arises naturally out of the state of presence, and you don't even, you don't need to keep the concept in your head, and tell yourself that I'm loving, a loving being. It's not needed anymore.

I sometimes surprised when people tell me things, and say, oh, people sometimes, because I'm kind of present, and people say, oh, you're so patient. Oh, I'm so patient? I didn't know I'm patient.

I hadn't thought about it as patient. It never occurred to me that I'm patient. I didn't have this concept at all, because patient still means that you're trying hard to be here, there's some kind of effort involved in being patient, but when true patience is there, you don't even know you're patient, you're just present.

Patient still means you're halfway, you're half there and half not there, you're practicing to be patient. Okay, I'll be patient for another half hour, but then I will have had enough. So it's wonderful when all these concepts are not really needed anymore.

But there is a stage when they may be helpful. There is a stage when the affirmation on the bathroom mirror is okay. But there also comes a time when you go beyond that.

You wouldn't want to be staring at a signpost. If you want to get to Rome, you wouldn't be staring at a signpost for years that says Rome, that way. And then there are the collectors of signposts.

They have a whole bunch stored up and then compare them, this compares to that one, and this tradition, and he said that, and he said that, and this. And if you become a collector of signposts, then it's hard to let go, because you have a precious collection. In a way, all teachings are signposts, and you don't need to even identify with any particular form of teaching.

There can be certain traps on the spiritual path to identify with one particular form in which a teaching comes. And then he says, okay, I'm a Buddhist. And the other says, no, I'm a Sufi.

And the other says, well, I'm a Zen Buddhist, and you are Theravada. Zen is actually superior. Again, images come in, and they can be obstacles when you identify.

Ego on the spiritual path can creep in at any stage, so to look out. Now ego means a new image has formed again in your mind of who you are. Ego is a very subtle thing you can observe in yourself.

Comparison. Ego likes to compare itself. Comparison is an ego device.

So ego compares itself to others in a subtle way, and whenever ego is a feeling of inferiority or superiority arises as against others, both the feeling of, okay, I may not be as good as that person, or as knowledgeable or as spiritual as that person, that's ego, or feeling I'm more spiritual than that person, I've been practising for longer, or my tradition is better than that person's, then that's the superior ego coming in.

Even to have an image of yourself as spiritual, that the ego goes into that. Trying to live according to an image in your head, trying to be spiritual, to see yourself as spiritual, that's another ego trap. And then you become more unconscious in a way.

Ego means unconsciousness has returned, and despite your meditation practice, then you find there are lots of things that if you have an image of yourself as spiritual, then there are lots of things you can't, you have to deny that arise inside you and that would be, if you looked at them openly, they would be telling you, oh no, you're not that spiritual. You have to push them aside. Anger, whatever comes up, if it no longer fits your self-image, you push it aside, and then it goes building up momentum like a boiling kettle, a boiling pot, you have to put the lid on, and the steam is building up, and then suddenly you get an outburst or a wave of depression.

In Christianity, often they have tried to live according to what it's like to be a good Christian, trying hard, and anything that doesn't fit the self-image of me as a good Christian has to be pushed aside, and then you can't push it aside forever. At some point, the unconscious will again emerge and overwhelm you as rage, as anxiety, as depression, a mood, dark mood suddenly, and then you have a new energy coming in. And so presence is to live free of self-images, because that's mind, it's conditioning, free of needing some image to tell you who you are.

You don't really need that. And this is why I said you learn from animals, although animals have no self-image, they are themselves. They act naturally, spontaneously, or rather life acts through them.

They have of course the limitations of their particular form, and yet they are more deeply connected to the Source than humans in their normal state. So that's again, that's why it's so helpful to learn to watch an animal, it doesn't live through a self-image. It is itself.

It's the natural state. And what we are returning to is the natural, in India they sometimes use that expression, the natural state that humans lost a long time ago. So that's wonderful, you're returning to that.

So simply observe when some new self-image has formed, or some old self-image has returned, look so often, be aware of comparison. Comparison as an ego-device, as a self-image, as a self-image in a subtle way, you're feeling better than, or not as good as. There's the ego.

Better than, not as good as. Another sign that you're living through a self-image is defensiveness. Defensiveness arises when somebody questions your beliefs, questions a statement that you've made, doubts this or that, that you associate with your self-image.

So observe defensiveness coming in, and it's always, you're always defending an image, because who you truly are doesn't need any defense. It's so powerful, cannot be attacked, cannot be, it's totally beyond anything that could be injured or attacked in any way. It doesn't need any defenses.

So observing when it happens, when you observe it, you're no longer trapped in that

unconscious movement. When you observe that an image has arisen in your mind, and you've become identified with that, at that moment, oh, that's the, again, the unconditioned has come in. You're suddenly aware of it.

When you're observing that you've become defensive about a position you have taken, may even be something spiritual, my mental position, it's, you've identified with a position, which means an image has formed in your mind of me, and that needs to be defended. Therefore, the Course in Miracles says, it has some wonderful statements, whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion. Whenever you become defensive about anything, know that you have identified yourself with an illusion.

But the knowing is not part of the illusion. That's the beauty of it. The moment you know that you have identified yourself with an illusion, the knowing is not the illusion.

You have recognized the illusion, and in that knowing, you are free of the illusion. So the more illusions like that you discover in yourself, the better. Because every time you discover a mind pattern, an old mind pattern acting itself out, a self-image, defensiveness, grasping, clinging, the moment you become aware of patterns, the awareness or the knowing is not part of that.

That's why it's so wonderful, the more you discover that's unconscious in you, the better. It doesn't mean that you have failed. Discovering it is, this is how it works, to recognize it.

To recognize illusion as illusion is not illusion. You have recognized. The recognition is not part of the conditioned mind.

The recognition is the unconditioned. It sees. It just sees there.

So this is the wonderful thing that means you can afford the luxury of allowing whatever arises inside you to arise. You don't have to deny anything when we do this work, if you want to call it work. You don't need to deny anything which you need to if you live through a self-image.

Anything that doesn't fit the self-image is denied. But in this work, whatever arises, you allow it. Emotional patterns, mind patterns arise, and there comes the recognition as they arise.

When I say allow whatever arises to arise, you might ask, well doesn't everybody live in that way? No, they don't. The allowing implies that there is an awareness, and the awareness is not part of the conditioned.

When I say allow, it implies there is a presence that observes the pattern as it unfolds, either in your head or externally as a behavior pattern when you're talking to someone.

So just watch. The more you see, the more consciousness grows.

The more unconscious patterns you discover in yourself, the more consciousness is growing. So it doesn't arise anymore to say, oh I shouldn't be feeling this, I shouldn't have that thought, I shouldn't, this doesn't arise anymore. The deep, the allowing of inner states, the wonderfully liberating practice.

And then you know that there's no inner state that is actually you, no inner, no conditioned state is who you really are. That's why you're free to allow them. Otherwise, if anger comes and you identify with it and say, oh I shouldn't be that, I've been on the spiritual path for so many years and I'm still getting all this anger, I shouldn't, then you want to repress it or deny it or say, no I'm not angry, I'm just, I'm never angry.

Don't accuse me of being angry. You are angry. The typical ego interactions.

Me unconscious, you are the one who is unconscious. And observe how mechanical defensiveness is, the mechanical nature, the condition, it arises almost like clockwork, almost automatically. Somebody pushes a button and the reaction comes.

And when people know you, after a while, if they want a reaction, they just push the button. It's like a robot. A few months ago I was walking in Stanley Park in Vancouver by the pond.

Just an example, I'm always watching around me because one can learn so much by simply watching people. Now I don't mean, animals of course are deeper learning, but you can learn about dysfunction by watching people. There was a man, an old elderly man, feeding the ducks with breadcrumbs.

And then two youngsters, teenagers on bicycles, 16 year old, came up and they were wearing a badge, some voluntary workers, ecological voluntary working brigade or something. And they talked to the man who was feeding the ducks and said, oh, do you know that feeding the ducks is actually bad for them, feeding them breadcrumbs, because it fills up their stomach and doesn't give them enough nourishment. And he was feeding the duck.

And then he said, yeah, yeah, I know. And he continued to feed the ducks. And then they said a bit more, and then the defensiveness came up.

He actually admitted that he knew it was bad for them, but somehow perhaps it gave him pleasure, maybe it's the only interaction he has in life to feed the ducks. So the pleasure he derives from feeding the ducks was greater than knowing that it's actually harmful for them. And then he said, okay, I'm not stupid, nobody's going to tell me what to do, I'm not stupid.

So ego reaction came like clockwork, and he started talking angrily and defending

himself. Didn't make much sense, because you can't defend behaviour that you've just recognised as wrong. But the ego doesn't care, it was an automatic defence mechanism, and he talked for several minutes, getting more and more angry, defending.

Now what was he defending? A mental position, a mental image, his ego. And finally the youngsters who were perhaps, were present, seemed quite present or well trained at least, they said, thank you for listening to us, bye bye.

And then the man walked on, and I walked on, and to 50 yards further on I could see him, he was again feeding the ducks. But it's, now let's just see if presence had been there in him at that moment, let's say, let's replay the same scenario. He's feeding the ducks, the youngsters come, say, do you know it's harmful, and he's, perhaps the first statement was actually true, he said, yes I know.

And then he would say, I know you're absolutely right, it just gives me so much pleasure, I can't help it, I just feel that I need to feed the ducks, but you're right, I'll stop now, or I'll just give them the rest of what I have, but I know you're absolutely right, but it's just, I love the ducks so much, and it gives me so much pleasure to feed them. Now that is, that is, his true power would be to feed the ducks, it would not be arising where the ego would have said, no, this is, you become annihilated, this is weakness, defend yourself. But if he had honestly expressed that, not needing to defend an image, then a true power would have arisen in him.

His true power would have come forth, and to the ego that looked like becoming vulnerable, like becoming vulnerable, but it's not, it's true strength. And the whole interaction, the quality would have changed with it, there might have been a true communication between two human beings, the youngsters and the old man. There might even have been love.

It could have been a wonderful encounter, but the ego didn't allow that. It needed to defend itself. That's, you get, people get more and more trapped in that, and this is just a tiny example.

Now imagine somebody living like his whole life in that way, and most people are. Not so much perhaps, perhaps everybody in this room recognises a little bit of that, sometimes more than a little bit in their own lives, but most people in this room are not totally, nobody in this room is totally trapped in those ego patterns. Everybody who sits here, there's some already areas of freedom where you go beyond ego opening up, otherwise you wouldn't be here.

And the ego wouldn't have allowed you to come here, or if you had come anyway, it would have become too painful, you would have gone home by now. Now the interesting thing, when this, when presence, the dimension comes in, and you observe defensiveness, then, oh God, there it is, and then sometimes through the simple fact of

observation, you go beyond it, because that's the power that is, where you don't need the defensiveness anymore. And then there's the shift, suddenly.

And always the mind will tell you, dangerous, dangerous, defend yourself, protect yourself. So you learn by observing other human beings, and then observing yourself, of course. The spiritual teaching or teacher, if it is true, says, okay, do you realize that you don't need to suffer anymore?

Are you fed up enough with suffering? Or would you like to hang on to suffering? Anybody who has come here today, has already suffered enough.

Otherwise you wouldn't be here. So in a way, your suffering has been wonderful, because it's taken you to this point. I know that I wouldn't be sitting here without having had dreadful suffering and pain.

So it's, it's taken you here, and now the message that comes is, further suffering is not necessary if you voluntarily step into the new state of consciousness. You choose the kingdom of heaven. Life doesn't have to drag you into it, kick you into the kingdom of heaven, it's painful.

It did that to me. But now my job is to tell people that you don't have to wait for that to happen to you. Choose the new state, and you're able to do that.

I wouldn't tell this to anybody, but not anybody comes here. If you come here, your level of consciousness, the new consciousness is sufficiently emerged already for you to understand what I mean when I say you can choose to live in the state that is free of suffering. You can choose the state in which suffering is not possible anymore.

Unhappiness does not arise. Not a state in which you close yourself and you become, okay, nothing can touch me anymore. Protective shell, nothing to do with that, because if nothing can touch, if you have a protective shell around you, that means all the beautiful and good things can't touch you anymore either.

That's not what it is. It's a state of complete openness, a state of such intense presence that unhappiness has nowhere to cling to anymore. Because unhappiness can only cling to a mentally made sense of self, a little me, past, which moves continuously in past and future and continuously ignores the now.

So the realization that in the now there are no problems and there is no unhappiness. And the unhappy me that lives through past and future dissolves as you become present. That's the teaching.

That's the very same message that the Buddha gave 2,600 years ago and a few people got it. And then misinterpretation started because the mind started getting in there and say, okay, let's work this out. What does it really mean?

How can we categorize it? How can we make a system out of that? So a heavy superstructure of mind stuff arose on top of the beautiful teaching.

So this always happens. The mind tries to get in there and so the heaviness of religion arises on top of the purity and simplicity of the original teaching. And this is the simplicity of the original teaching.

We're going back to that. Freedom from pain is possible now. Now first that means you understand how pain arises.

It arises by not being present to this moment, by running away, by fighting, by denying, by running away internally from what is. So that's how pain arises always. When you accept what is, the new state of consciousness immediately is present.

So you can't separate acceptance of what is from the new state of thoughtless awareness. The moment you fully accept what is, the new state of thoughtless awareness is present. The whole mind stuff is resisting what is.

Its very existence, the very ground for its existence is the continuous state of resistance to what is. So resistance to what is and the old consciousness go together. So our practice is to not resist what is and thereby access the power of life.

And yet that may not immediately free you of all pain and suffering because humans have been in that state for many thousands of years and there is an energy field of pain that every human being inherits simply by the very fact that you are born into the human condition into the unenlightened painful human condition and ultimately mad human condition up to this point. You are born into that so every human being has a share of human pain that comes even from very, as you are born into this world you are already born with a burden of pain. So this is a very important part of our practice and realization.

This is not a facile thing of saying okay from now on we can all be happy. It goes deeper than that and we are not running away also, we are not running away from the fact that in you there lives an energy field of residue of past human pain on a personal level, pain from childhood that leaves residues, energetic residues, different things, painful things have happened to you in childhood and of course far beyond that in time. But let's just talk from the level of your present existence in this form, pain that is carried over from your childhood and beyond and leaves, doesn't go away completely, it leaves residues of pain and energy fields, everything is energy.

Then those energy fields get together because they feel, they vibrate at the same frequency so emotional pain gathers into one mass of pain, contracted energy that isn't flowing freely, an energy that I call the pain body that humans carry inside, an energy field of pain. And if you don't recognize that, no matter how much spiritual practice you

do and even what we are doing here, if you do not see, if you do not recognize how the pain body operates, it will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness through it. So I want to address it now.

So first we realize there is an energy field of pain in me that may manifest either as turbulence, anger, heaviness like depression, tightness, fear, whatever way it manifests, it's not pleasant, it's painful, it's past pain, residues, but very much alive still. You carry it inside. But you're not always conscious of it and I talk about it briefly in one chapter of the book, so we go into it a little bit more deeply now and now there's the added energy of presence that we take into the pain body.

The pain body is sometimes dormant and sometimes active. It becomes active when you suddenly feel it very strongly, when it needs to feed on further experience of pain. As it always has to do regularly, like it's a little entity almost, it needs feeding temporarily on the experience of further pain.

And you will know that this has happened when a relatively insignificant trigger produces an incredible outburst reaction of pain. A minor thing goes wrong or somebody says something or your partner does something or says something and there's suddenly a deep or even a thought comes in and suddenly it serves as a trigger for an immense, the arising of deep emotional pain. At that moment, the pain body, this energy field, has come up out of its dormant state.

It is ready to feed on more pain. It produces an enormous amount of pain. There are two ways in which it produces, it feeds on the further experience, because it's all you can feed on.

The pain body consists of that energy of pain it needs. Please, where can I get more pain? It feeds on your thoughts when it's ready to rise up, and it feeds on your thoughts.

It will control your thinking. It rises into the mind, and the mind, which is your thought activity, becomes aligned with the pain body. Every thought you think is destructive and painful.

And the pain body loves it. It gobbles up the energy of every thought that you think, every destructive and deeply negative thought. It eats it up, so to speak.

And it's having a good time. It's feeding. And at that moment, one way of putting it is, one could say that that is the addictive quality of human pain.

Addictive because it loves its pain. When the pain body has taken you over, and has succeeded in pretending that that's who you are, all your thinking is completely aligned with it. And it's feeding on it.

At that very moment, the least thing you want, the last thing you want, is to be free of

pain. At that moment, pain is what you want, because at that moment you are the pain body. And anybody who tells you that, if I came into your life at that moment, and gave you this message, that a life free from pain is possible, you would hit me over the head.

Because the pain body would be there, and I would be talking to the pain body, and the pain body would be talking back at me. So the pain body needs to come in periodically. And you will all, you all have experienced it, with partners, finding the ideal partner, and after a few weeks, feeling that there's another side to them, that periodically they become a little monster.

And then thinking, oh, I must have made a dreadful mistake. You haven't. Everybody has a pain body, including yourself.

But it's a bit more difficult to see the little monster coming up in yourself. Now, the pain body will use your thinking, it will feed on your negative and destructive thinking. It can go on.

Now, how long the feeding time lasts of a particular pain body varies greatly from person to person. It could be a brief one, a pain body that feeds very quickly, could be an hour or two. Some pain bodies have a feeding time of several weeks, even months.

That's extreme. But the pain body is extreme. And in very extreme cases, there are some pain bodies that have virtually no dormant stage.

They are continuously feeding and active. But that's more rare. Much also happens.

You sometimes meet people who are, and you look into their eyes, and you can see they are, the pain body is looking at you through their eyes, and they are waiting for an excuse to have more. They want you to give them a painful reaction. They want you to be angry with them.

They want you to attack them. That's people who are totally possessed by the pain body. So, level one, pain body feeds on your thinking.

Level two, pain body feeds, it might even predominantly use somebody else's reactions. In relationships, when the pain body is ready to arise and feed, it will provoke a reaction in your partner or the partner does it to you, pushes the right buttons, because it wants pain. The pain body loves the drama.

This is why drama is an essential part of most relationships. The pain body needs feeding, and you could be saying, suddenly it comes in. At the slightest trigger, there it is.

So it feeds on the other person's reaction, and that's where drama arises in the relationship. And it will give me more pain. And the mind is aligned with it, so the mind

will find wonderful ways of rationalizing why it will add to it, through heated discussions or shouting matches.

And then the other person's pain body awakens, and the two feed on each other, until feeding time is over. And the two pain bodies subside, go to sleep, digesting food, and then the relationship for a while is harmonious again. And then the cycle starts again.

So pain body feeding on thinking, pain body feeding on other people's reactions. Now I mentioned the unhappy me, a mind pattern that people are identified with, an unhappy sense of self. This mind pattern, when the pain body is active, becomes amplified, its energy, the energy of the unhappy me, when the pain body moves into that mind pattern, that already has been telling you, your life isn't good enough, and so on, and you may not make it, and life has passed me by, and so on.

Now the pain body moves into that mind pattern, and its energy gets amplified 10 times, 20 times, 50 times, 100 times, in other words, the unhappy me, when the pain body arises and flows into that mind structure, the emotion flows into the mind structure, the unhappy sense of me becomes dreadfully unhappy, and loves its unhappiness. That's what it consists of. Now all that it is, it is not a foreign body that lives in you, it is, there's nothing that is not life energy, even the pain body is life energy, except that it isn't flowing freely, it's got stuck somewhere.

And when energy gets stuck and cannot flow freely, pain arises, like a river, if a river cannot flow, the water accumulates and pressure accumulates. But it's really it's beautiful life energy, the water is still beautiful, but there's pressure accumulating inside. That's what the pain body is.

Now, as we bring presence, this consciousness, into the pain body, it no longer, can no longer fool you into completely identifying with it. The presence, as the pain arises, from now on, you, and many of you do, you are already practicing that, pain arises, the pain body comes up, and at that moment you will recognize it as the pain body. That's the beginning of freedom from it.

The recognition, when it comes, slight trigger, provocation, even a thought, deep pain arises, in whatever form, in some people it's a very active pain, active, aggressive pain, in other people it's a passive form of pain, poor, little me, victim pain. Doesn't matter which pain bodies have different qualities, in different people. It may be turbulence or heaviness or tightness or constriction, it doesn't matter what it is.

As it arises, you will know there is a witnessing presence. And you watch, oops, there's the pain body. And you feel the energy field of it in your body.

Often you can feel it in the solar plexus or stomach area, sometimes in the belly, as a dreadful sense of, oh, heaviness, or some people perceive it as a big hole, some gaping

hole inside, or it may be intense anger. But whatever it is, if you watch it, this is why sitting here is so helpful, because the witnessing presence, which is part of this new state of consciousness, gets so much strengthened simply by sitting in this energy field. So the watcher will be there, watching the pain, so the pain cannot use your mind anymore, it cannot feed on your thinking, because you are watching it directly, it cannot creep into your mind and then become an unhappy me.

So all that's left of the pain is an energy field of turbulence or heaviness, but the pain has not become an unhappy me, an unhappy sense of self, of who you are. That's the beginning of the end of the pain. But our practice is allowing what is to be, and that also applies as long as the pain body is there in you, allowing the pain that is there in you also to be.

That is a very powerful practice. So I'm not saying we are not fighting the pain, we are not even trying to get rid of it. You bring the consciousness, which is a very compassionate state of allowing what is its very powerful state, it implies your present, as the one who is able to allow, you are the one who is able to allow the pain to be.

You know you're not creating this pain at this moment, because you practice accepting what is. So it's not pain that you are creating, it's old pain. You bring the acceptance to the old pain.

This wonderful state, this powerful practice, it does not just concern what happens to you externally, allowing this moment to be as it is, it includes the arising of pain and the pain body. You watch it, feel it, allow it. So you bring presence into it.

You meet the presence meets the pain body. Here's the pain body, and there comes the silent space of presence. Okay.

And you hold the state of presence as the turbulence happens. Then the pain body is not replenishing itself. You've cut the link between the pain body and your thought processes.

It's not feeding on your thinking anymore. You're watching it. Now the best time to catch it and watch it is as it first arises in you, as you first notice it arising, to immediately become very alert with every cell of your body and feel it.

There it is. And stay alert. Stay present.

Continue to watch. This is the beginning of the transmutation of pain. The more you watch, the less it can feed.

It loses its energy charge every time you stay present as the watcher of it. It's not gaining new energy. In fact, it's losing energy as the pain body, but the very energy that was trapped in there as the pain body becomes part of the aliveness of who you are.

Many people's life energy is, to a large extent, trapped in their pain body. They have little access to their aliveness because the pain absorbs so much of their aliveness and it's all trapped in there, in a big unhappy me. And nothing is flowing.

There's no flow whatsoever. There's only a big, huge contraction. Many human beings are one big contraction.

It's amazing. The egoic state is one big contracted, nothing flows. And as the energy becomes freed that's in the pain body, there's an incredible increase in aliveness and vitality.

And of course, pain goes. It won't, it will not go the very first time you do it. You will have to do it many times.

Many times it will try to arise again and it will arise. Many times you will lose it. You will lose yourself in it again.

That's all right. It's all part of this. There will be times when it will take you over again.

And afterwards you remember, oh, there it was, and I missed it completely. You might have gone through three hours of drama with your partner and afterwards you say, oh, that was the pain body. I missed it completely.

That's all right. Next time maybe you'll catch it and know that it's there. The good thing is that the pain body becomes actually your ally in your presence practice because without it, very few people would have enough motivation to enter the new state of consciousness.

Every time the pain body comes, until you know this fact, the pain body will trick you every time and you will lose consciousness every time. But now that you know this, whenever it comes, it becomes incorporated into your practice of presence. So the more often it comes, the better it is.

You're lucky. If you have a strong pain body, you're lucky. It's good for your practice.

It can become a great teacher. That is the most, actually the most powerful part of your practice is to work with the pain body and see how quickly the transmutation happens when it no longer is an unhappy me. It's simply pain.

Not pleasant, but you can allow it and there's an incredible intensification of presence every time you bring it to the pain body. Now those of you who have very dense or heavy pain bodies will need more intense presence. Most people who, that I know, who have gone to become almost free of pain, and not yet many who are completely free, but they will be, are people who have very dense pain bodies because their motivation is stronger to be free.

[Speaker 2] (1:52:39 - 1:53:36)

This concludes Session Two. Our program continues with Session Three. Sounds True and Namaste Publishing present Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body.

Session Three with Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (1:53:51 - 2:09:15)

In Eastern terms we are talking about karma. Karma really ultimately is all the conditioning from the past, including the past pain, that you mistakenly believe is who you are. Karma is to be identified with all past conditioning and to be condemned to relive and act out continuously your past conditioning.

So pain body is an aspect, an important aspect of karma. So what we are addressing here is going beyond the unconsciousness that is karma. What we are talking about here is actually the dissolving of karma.

There would be no end to karma otherwise because it renews itself. That's why it's often likened to a wheel. It renews itself continuously.

This is an end to pain, an end to suffering. Use your relationships in your practice and realize that no matter who you choose as your partner they will have a pain body. Don't look for the ideal partner without a pain body.

And that's good. And use the relationship because it's so much easier to become aware of your own pain body in a relationship than if you live alone. Great opportunity for practice.

If both of you understand how it works, you could have an agreement that you will help each other when the pain body arises in the other person so that the other can stay very very present instead of going into reactivity. Stay very very present. And if the partner gets taken over by the pain body, stay so present that you allow it without reacting and thinking that that's who that person is.

Allowing it. If your partner doesn't want to cooperate, you just do it for yourself. It only takes one person ultimately to be free.

It's great if he or she does. For many women, pain body arises as the approaching menstrual cycle comes. I mentioned it briefly in the book.

Because there is so much collective female pain, there is a cause. One aspect of pain body is collective human pain. Now collective may be the pain of a nation that you belong to.

Certain nations have more of a heaviness to them than other nations. The new world has relatively less heaviness to it than the old world. Because the old world, Europe, Asia to some extent, there is so much past there.

There is so much. The heaviness of past and the heaviness of past pain is very much apparent. Certain countries, you just get off the plane and if you are sensitive, you feel the energy field of the collective pain body.

Eastern Europe, in many countries you can feel it the moment you step. Germany, I feel it the moment I step off the plane. Russia.

And every individual who lives part of their pain body is a part of the collective pain body. So it's not just a past. Pain body is never a personal problem of yours.

It's the human condition. It's your share in the human condition. Not a personal problem.

There are no personal problems. Every pain that you have in your life is your share of the human condition manifesting in a particular form. So there is one aspect of the collective pain body is the nation, the national.

The United States has some pain body, but less karma. There is less karma here than European states, and certainly some European states. And even such a thing as a relatively short-lived, like Vietnam War or something, adds a bit to the collective pain body experience.

Fifty million men, fifty thousand men killed in some distant country, and the Secretary of State at that time in his autobiography now says, well, in retrospect it was probably a mistake. Human madness, just one more manifestation of human madness. But if you, and some of you were actually, I know, had to go there and suffer pain there, then that's fine.

You work with that now. Now there's also female collective pain body, just as there's a male collective pain body. The female collective pain body that every woman partakes in has to do with dreadful pain suffered particularly through women being treated as slaves and as worthless property for thousands of years.

Not always, there was a time before that when women had their rightful place, but for thousands of years in most countries, women became victim of the patriarchal, mind-dominated state of consciousness. So that becomes particularly pronounced when the menstrual cycle starts, the very thing that is the femininity in you on the biological level is very painful. It awakens the female pain body just as it happens.

And this is, in the old traditional teachings in Buddhism they say, no, women can never make it. They can't become enlightened because every time they go through their cycle they lose consciousness. So they say, okay, we have to exclude women.

And they did. And so it's become more and more lifeless by doing that. And it's become more and more mind-dominated.

The very fact is that the opposite is true. If women can use that, knowing that that is the time particularly when the pain body arises, and become present at that time, it will be through that that women become very quickly now free of their pain body. By bringing presence into, especially when the pain body arises at the approaching menstrual cycle, bring presence into that and become very alert.

Watch the pain arising. Watch it, allow it to be. Be compassionate towards it, which is what the allowing is.

Be compassionate, the compassionate one who allows the pain to be, and who is able to hold it, to hold the turbulence. The state of presence is always a gentle embracing of what is. It's bringing a gentleness to it which is a very powerful gentleness.

Bringing the gentleness to it and embracing what is, and holding it in that embrace. And you stay present as you hold your pain, the pain, and watch the turbulence of it. Hold it.

The more you hold it, the stronger, very, very quickly your sense of presence grows much, much stronger as you hold the pain. And the pain will slowly lessen. But it no longer matters because your acceptance of the pain is so total, you're not making that moment into a means to an end because I want to get to the end of my pain.

Your acceptance of pain is complete and that's where your spiritual power lies, in fully accepting it. But of course now it hasn't become you. It hasn't become an unhappy me.

You are fully there, you are fully present with it, you fully accept that there is the pain body vibrating in you. And you may have to hold that pain for quite a while when the cycle comes, it can go on for a few days, and hold, bring presence to it. You may occasionally lose it and then remember again and be present with it again.

By losing it I mean it may succeed in moving into your mind and control your thinking again. And then suddenly you'll remember and you hold it, holding it. So that pain becomes incredible teacher and every time it happens you bring the presence to it.

That's why women are going, it's already, there's always more women coming to consciousness groups than men. Women will move forward more quickly now than men. I've seen it, I'm seeing it all the time.

And part of the reason is that they'll be able to work with their pain bodies, which up to now has looked, has been a great obstacle, now becomes a great help as you bring the presence to it. Men still have, are less in touch with their bodies, more, women of course are also in the mind, but men even more deeply entrenched in their mind structures. So there's a different, they of course also have pain bodies, but the predominant thing for

men is identification with their head.

The predominant thing for women is identification with pain body. So that's, these are just the focal points. Wonderful practice and I'd love to know, those of you who have already been practicing after reading the book, how you're doing and how it's, what ought to be the obstacles there are, where it is becoming difficult, or any questions that arise out of that.

But it is, it is so, this practice is so easy and so wonderful and so powerful that it's amazing that it's taken humans so long to get to this point. But transformation can be very quick now, very quick. So make your pain body into your ally.

Your pain body is not your enemy. When you make it into an enemy, that's the old mind thing starting over and making even the pain body into a problem. How can I get rid of it?

Forget about getting rid of it. Just watch it. That does it.

And then, at first the pain seems overwhelming. And the more you bring your presence to it, you realize how powerful your presence actually is. And that the pain ultimately is a, just ripples on the surface of the vastness of who you are.

All human pain ultimately is surface ripples, or little waves, pretending to be very big waves. And when you realize the vastness of your being, then very quickly you realize it's only, ultimately it's just a little bit of pain, but it blew itself up to gigantic proportions. That's the practice of liberation.

It doesn't take long. People ask me sometimes, well, how long do we have to do that for? And that can vary from person to person, depending on the density of the pain body and other factors.

It doesn't really matter. The practice itself is beautiful. But I have seen people with extremely heavy pain bodies going, reducing the energy charge of their pain body by about 80 to 90% in two years of practicing this.

Now, that's people with incredibly dense pain bodies. So, that is possible. It is not that you need a lifetime of practice to become, or even as some traditional teachers may tell you, you will make it, you will need, some teachers may tell you, okay, you need five more lifetimes.

Or, you will make it in your next lifetime. Or in 20 years time, I will give you liberation, if you, after you've given me all your money. Let's ask a question if one arises.

Would you want to ask a question? Is the microphone going there? While the microphone travels there, we are present, not waiting for anything to happen.

[Speaker 3] (2:09:26 - 2:09:51)

I'm wondering how you handle when two people's pain bodies collide. Oh, yes. For example, there's, well, my wife, who I love very deeply, there's my raging pain body, and then there's my pain in the ass body, which sometimes rages back.

And I'm wondering how one handles that.

[Speaker 1] (2:09:54 - 2:21:32)

Now, use the relationship as an essential part of your practice. The pain body is not there continuously. As you know, it arises at times.

And it will start arising in one person, either you or your partner. Be there as it arises in yourself. Watch the beginning of it, the beginning of pain.

That implies I wouldn't be telling this if you did not have the necessary degree of presence to be there as the witness. But you have now, if only after sitting here for three hours, there is enough presence for you to be there as the witness of the pain as it arises. If you catch it at an early stage, it's easier to stay present, and it won't take you over.

If it arises so quickly, and that happens in certain pain bodies whose energy field predominantly is anger, anger has a fiery quality to it. And an angry pain body, as opposed to a heavy depressed pain body, an angry pain body, you have virtually no time to watch it arising, because it arises like an explosion, and is there fully fledged in one second. So if it's an angry pain body, it's very hard to watch it arising, because it arises explosively.

If it's a different pain body, a heavy one, fearful one, it's easier to watch it arising and trying to get into your mind. So being there as it starts, the partner can be very helpful, because you may already at an early stage become identified with it and start to argue, and of course the arguing will already be energized by the pain that lies behind the mental rationalizations and arguments. And your partner may still be present, and become intensely present, and watch as your pain body arises.

Your partner watches the arising. If you can't watch the arising of your own pain body, which sometimes you may not be able to yet, your partner can do it for you almost. That's how wonderful the relationship can work.

Your partner becomes the witness. If you lose the witness, your partner becomes the witness. This can be a very powerful practice.

So what then happens, if I'm with a partner, I can see the pain body arising and already creeping into her mind, wanting me to react, enter the state of intense presence, which

is also a state of great openness. And you feel immediately every cell of your body vibrates with life. And you hold that state of complete openness and presence, and you watch the arising of the partner's pain body going through the mind.

Now it will try every trick to pull you into unconscious reaction to the pain body. Pain bodies have extreme cleverness. Your partner will try every trick, it will try, it will push buttons that have worked in the past every time in making you unconscious, say just the right thing that he or she knows is going to make you unconscious and give an emotional reaction.

And you stay present. Do it for them. If they lose themselves in the pain body, you hold the presence and watch how the pain body tries every trick to get you, to pull you into unconsciousness.

And that presence is always, it emanates as an energy field around you. So if you're with someone, if you stay intensely present, there's an emanation of presence around you. It's very hard for a pain body to remain active for long in the energy field of presence, even if it comes from another person.

Now it may be that the pain body will remove itself, the person will run out of the room, or jump in the car and drive off, or there will be a sudden, and this can happen and it's miraculous, in the middle of being taken over by the pain body there's an awakening and there's a sudden aware presence that suddenly is able to watch the intense pain taking place. It could even happen in the middle of a shouting, you're shouting at your partner, and at that moment presence arises. And what that feels like is like you're waking, you're an actor, and you're on stage acting out a script, a very powerful script, forgotten that you're acting out a script, and suddenly there's a remembering that this is just acting out, an acting out of a conditioned pattern.

And there's suddenly a watching presence there. That's amazing. So you help each other, if the other person loses him or herself, you stay present.

Presence never means that you withdraw or protect yourself. And you need to be, this is why being here is helpful to become familiar with the state of presence. Some people mistake it for a state of aloofness, when let's say you're being attacked by your partner's pain body, and then you go into withdrawal, it looks like this.

That's not presence. Even the little me can say, okay, I'm beyond such, I'm not touched by the pain body. I'm beyond such unconsciousness.

So presence is open, complete, it's the allowing, you allow your partner to be where he or she is. It's a deep allowing, a vast power comes with that. And again, you're embracing, whether you embrace your own pain, or you embrace your partner's pain, and you can remain in a state of love, and you realize there's the movement of pain.

And you don't need to point it out through words, that probably wouldn't work anyway at that point. But also be careful that the pain bodies are very cunning, and it is possible that your pain body may be arising and projecting something at that moment and saying to your partner, there's your pain body. All kinds of things can happen, but if you're present, that'll be fine.

I know of some couples who give themselves a secret signal when the other notices the pain body arising in the partner. And for some that works, a little hand signal, or the, just, but it can be, sometimes it doesn't work at all when the pain body hasn't, it can, the pain body is already there, and it's being told something, and of course the reactive force can be very strong then. One signal that definitely doesn't work that somebody suggested to me is, so it is helpful sometimes after you've had an interaction governed by the pain body, to talk about it and see where it started, where it came in first, how it used the mind, how it used arguments and mental positions of me being right and you being wrong, how it moved into those mind structures, and talk about it afterwards. It's a good practice occasionally to retrospectively bring presence into an event when you got completely taken over by it.

So after consciousness has returned, you kissed and made up and had a nice meal, or whatever else you have afterwards, and then talk about it, and isn't that, that was the pain body, did it start in you or in me? Let's see, let's trace it back to the beginning. There it was, the beginning movement when you didn't phone me to let me know you were going to be late, or you didn't put the garbage out.

It can start with very insignificant things. So retrospectively to bring presence into the whole growth of it, and then next time see if you can be present as it happens. Wonderful practice.

And whenever you lose it, afterwards see where you lost it. Not in some kind of, oh I have failed to strengthen the little me that isn't good enough. No, just looking at it objectively, see that's where it started.

That's where the whole pain movement started. That's good practice too. So see, talk to your partner and see, so you can help each other in it.

It makes it easier if you help each other. Because it's always one partner when it comes into one person, the other will still be for a little while conscious. So that's a great advantage.

Next time I come, let me know how it's going. The mic is coming.

[Speaker 5] (2:21:36 - 2:21:47)

I wanted to ask you about consciousness in children and if we can prevent them from having the pain movement.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:47 - 2:24:10)

Oh that's a good question, yes. Asking about consciousness in children and if we can prevent children from having or developing a pain body. Now many children absorb pain body at an early age from their parent's pain body.

That adds greatly to, some pain is already present in every human being, even as they come into this world, but that adds greatly to the personal pain body. You absorb the pain. It happened, my pain body grew very quickly in the first six, seven years of my life because my parent's pain bodies were both there with great intensity.

Many homes are like that. So children absorb their parent's pain body. Now, of course, you're asking the question for the people in this room and they're all, there's consciousness moving in.

The most helpful thing you can do with children is to bring consciousness into your own pain body. Or if you live with a partner, you do it, both of you do it, so that you don't emanate and act out continuously pain body and then they absorb it. Now, but even those, even children where parents are not getting lost in their pain body, they will still have a certain amount of pain.

And many children, even four, three or four year olds, you can often observe how an angel, within a few seconds, can be transformed into a screaming monster. It's a very powerful thing. The transformation is so amazing, we take it for granted that that's normal.

This beautiful being, light shining out of his or her eyes, not much mind started yet, the egoic me is not very strong yet, so there's still a lot of being flowing through their eyes. And suddenly they go into dreadful contraction and throw themselves on the floor and start screaming.

[Speaker 7] (2:24:13 - 2:24:15)

That's the pain body.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:18 - 2:29:23)

And it's relatively short lived with children because it doesn't, their mind isn't developed enough for the pain body to hang on in their mind for a long period of time. So it goes through quickly and believes them, it subsides again quickly. Now, the greatest thing you can do for children is to point out to them that there's something happening after an event like that, a screaming fate, or what other children may do, other things, extreme withdrawal or something, to say what happened when this energy, do you remember yesterday when you had the screaming fate?

What happened there? Who was that? I see by talking, by pointing out that there was an energy movement in the child and perhaps giving it a name, you can help the child to stay present and watch it as it arises.

You can't do it in the middle of it, you have to do it afterwards. You can't talk to a screaming monster. But when the angel is back, you talk to the angel and say, who was that monster?

Not to induce any guilt or anything like that, in an interested way, isn't that funny, where does that come from? Has he got a name? And then next time it happens, just as it arises, oh, there, so-and-so is back.

You can say it even while it's happening, although of course that won't wake them up at that point, but a little bit of awareness will be there at that point. And after it has subsided, you say again, oh, it was again, wasn't that funny? And if you can catch the arising of the pain body in the child just as it first starts, you can say, oh, it's coming on, can you feel it?

That means very quickly the witnessing presence in the child will grow and they can actually watch the movement of the pain body in themselves. And that is wonderful, that's something that every parent, everybody who sits here can do easily. So you're not trying to get rid of it, it's almost like it's a phenomenon that you and the child together contemplate.

And you have to admit openly if your own pain body has taken you over, you can say, you know what, that was the same thing happened in me. What happened this morning, you talk to the child, that was mine. And a point may come when the child may tell you, oh, there's your pain body.

It is a truly functional home when that happens. And children can do that. And they would love to be there as the watcher.

It's like a game, it's fun. Here's something to surrender to. Now, even with something, before we ask the next question, even with something like that, this is a minor irritation, unless your pain body is ready to awaken, in which fact it could be a big irritation.

Oh, unfortunately it's stopped now. Anything like that, you can practice even with little irritations, practice, see if you can be in complete acceptance of that, what was up to this point irritating, just completely allowing it, allowing it totally. So you work with it, whatever it is, you work with it, allowing it totally, and see what happens.

Anything that you allow totally takes you into peace, into the state of peace. Great peace. It's amazing.

Anything that you allow completely. So that's the work with children, it's wonderful.

[Speaker 4] (2:29:34 - 2:29:49)

All of us have pain bodies, as you point out, and most of us go to...

[Speaker 1] (2:29:49 - 2:40:14)

Now, at work, usually you go into an environment that is dominated by little me's and egos, and big ego structures, unconsciousness at work, many big objects, and so on and so on. Many organizations are still run, there are maybe a few exceptions, but many organizations are still run by that consciousness, that state of consciousness. So, a great help is not to expect others to be conscious.

Not to expect consciousness where there isn't consciousness. You will be very often, as you do this practice for yourself, you will very easily observe unconsciousness and pain bodies arising in other people at work, being acted out through their mind, and it will happen continuously, in some companies more than in others. And it's the same practice because it's basically a relationship, it's bringing presence into relationships.

When pain body arises in somebody else, don't go into the reactivity that would be the little me fighting somebody's pain body, which can easily trigger your own pain body, and you get a big argument. The practice is relinquishing the reactivity of the little me, so you allow unconsciousness in the other person. Doesn't mean you give in every time.

There's a great, it's getting hold of the state of presence and bringing presence into your work, to the conference table, to the committee meeting, and as you sit there, little egos having their battles all around the table, you watch, and perhaps for a moment you remember this moment, and that brings back the state of presence, and then you sit there in the state of, you feel intensely connected with the body, and you watch everybody's contribution without mental judgment, you bring presence to the conference table, to the committee meeting, not the reactivity of the me. You may find yourself making a contribution to the state of presence, and it'll bring a different quality to the whole interaction. There's one person there who brings in a different consciousness, and then see what happens.

So instead of, there's nothing you can do to change others as such. And most of the world still lives in unconsciousness. That's how it is.

Don't expect it to be otherwise. So it's allowing, it's in the allowing people their unconsciousness, this by the way also implies to your relationships with other people, like long-standing relationships with parents, which to many people, or children, grown-up children and parents, for many people it's a very problematic area, because there's so much past in there. There's often so much unconsciousness and dysfunction in families.

So the most beautiful thing happens when you can, let's say it's your parents, when you

can allow your parents completely to be in who they are, you give up, which is really the little me, you give up the desire to be understood by them. The little me says, you need to understand me. They won't.

But the weight, you will feel a weight being taken off your shoulders when you, there's a relinquishing of the need to be understood by your parents. Oh, that's a relief, they don't need to understand me. And then, there's a letting go, and this all comes with presence, there's a letting go of wanting them to be different, wanting them to behave differently.

Accusing them of having done this or that, or having failed to do this or that. There was nobody there to have failed, there was just unconsciousness in motion, nothing personal in it. They did what they could do, according to their level of consciousness.

Really, there was nobody there to ever have done anything or not done anything. It was unconsciousness playing itself out. That's why Jesus said, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

When you realize, they didn't know any better. There wasn't enough consciousness. If Jesus had lived now, he would have said, forgive them, for they are completely unconscious.

That's what it means. It's just unconsciousness playing itself out. And then, even that drops away, the feeling that they should have done something differently.

And the more presence arises in you, the more you realize nobody ever did anything to you. The presence, it's only the little, the identity of the little me feels hurt or injured. When the dimension of presence arises, presence always remained totally pristine, totally pure, totally fresh, and nothing ever happened to it.

The reality of who you are, nothing ever happened to that, no matter what pain was inflicted on you in your childhood. As presence emerges, you realize there is a dimension in you that was never touched. And then forgiveness happens automatically.

You don't have to try to forgive. As long as you try to forgive, it's not really working. Oh, I should be forgiving because I'm spiritual.

You cannot really make yourself. Forgiveness happens naturally as presence arises and you feel the vastness of who you truly are, beyond the little me. Forgiveness is just there, you don't even have a word for it anymore.

So it's really, towards all relationships, whether at work or with parents, between parents and children, the most powerful tool, the most, is to allow everyone to be who they are, which is an aspect of allowing this moment to be as it is. On the canvas of this moment, very often people will appear in it. Very often this moment will come to you as a person.

It may come to you as a person's pain body, coming out of this at you. Okay, the practice is, allow it to be. That's where power flows through.

The mind says, no, you can't allow it to be. You should be doing something about it. The most powerful transformation happens through allowing to be.

So when I say, allow the present moment to be, very often that means, allow this person to be. Allow the unconsciousness to be there. It's fine.

It's fine. It's fine. And then you will notice relationships with your parents improve dramatically when you give up the desire to be understood.

You don't need that anymore. You realize there was nobody there who ever did anything to you or failed to do anything. So you can see miraculous transformations in situations through allowing.

That's where the vast power comes through. Whether it's at work, or this, you can try it out. What's coming up soon?

Thanksgiving? Wonderful place to practice when all the family gets together. For some people it's agony having to go through that.

Now, this time, see if you can bring in complete acceptance of what is. Everybody around the table happens to be part of this moment then. Allow this moment, including the turkey dinner and whatever it is, people acting out their conditioned behavior.

You can predict what they are going to say next because they said the same thing ten years ago. Allow it to be. And then your next practice will be Christmas.

They get together again. It's always, that's always a good, and the ultimate test is parents. You may, Ram Dass said his famous statement, if you think you're so enlightened, go and spend a week with your parents.

[Speaker 6] (2:40:24 - 2:40:33)

Can you say a little bit about the intense pain of losing somebody through death, somebody who you're really close to, or the pain of a marriage dissolution?

[Speaker 1] (2:40:34 - 2:48:02)

Yes, thank you. Now, the pain of great loss, either loss of a loved one through death or loss of a relationship, which is also a close relationship, is also a kind of death. There may be some situations where surrendering to what is seems impossible.

Some situations are intrinsically so painful that you just, no matter, you may have been successfully practicing surrendering to what is, but suddenly something happens and

you just can't and intense pain arises. And this is the second level of surrender. The first level of surrender is surrendering to what is.

That's the most perfect surrender. The second level of surrender is to surrender to what you feel. So if pain arises, because you couldn't surrender on level one to what is, it just wasn't possible, if pain arises, you surrender to the pain.

You accept the pain. And that is a strange thing at first. Everything inside you says, no, this is dreadful.

I don't want the pain. The pain may flow into your mind. But if you surrender to the pain, that can be a wonderful opening, the pain of loss, deep loss.

Feel it and accept the pain that you feel so completely that almost as if there's not a person there anymore who is suffering the pain. There's only the pain. And there's a complete acceptance of that.

At first it's very, it seems unnatural to do that. But as you continue to accept it and be with that pain, instead of running away from it, you will, after a while, something happens and the pain turns around and there's suddenly a vast peace underneath the pain, which is not a denial of the pain. It's only by going into the pain and allowing it, you touch it suddenly.

Whenever there's loss, whether big loss or little loss, it's an opportunity. You're the fabric of your existence, but suddenly a hole appears in it. Something vital is gone.

That is an emptiness. Great loss leaves a feeling of great emptiness. And that great emptiness at first is deep pain, because there's a reaction.

The emptiness is painful. The reactive me reacts. Oh, now if you allow the emptiness to be, that is there where there was, that being is gone, there's a hole.

The winds of grace blow through that hole that is left when there's great loss. There's an incredible opportunity there if you only allow it. In the absence, whenever there's an absence of something that had been greatly valued, it leaves a nothingness.

The nothingness is at first very painful. As you surrender into the nothingness, there's a fullness that is hiding underneath, behind there. And some people have done that.

They have had, they lost everything all at once. There have been reports of people losing their position, their family, and their homes all at once. It's almost as if the fabric of your existence has only holes in it now.

And at first there was an influx of incredible, unbearable pain, and then there was complete surrender, and suddenly there was what Jesus calls the peace that passes all understanding, coming out of what was intense pain through surrender. And so that,

when somebody dies close to you, surrender to the pain, surrender to the feeling of the pain, and see how it becomes transformed. And what happens after that, it is, there's such an intense depth of peace and aliveness, if it could speak, of course it doesn't speak.

If it could speak, it would say, all is well, there is no death, if it could speak. That's what it feels like. But you don't even need the words.

And it will happen to everybody. Some loss, some great loss will come into everybody's life. Somebody close to you will die.

Another great loss will come. Your own death at some point will come approaching. And you can see, oh.

And by, perhaps everybody in this room by then will have already gone beyond identification with the little person and the little me, and already has access to a dimension that is beyond death. The reality of who you are that is beyond death. I don't want to give you any belief.

That's why I don't want to talk about it too much. It's, we are here to experience, to be the timeless consciousness, the timeless state of consciousness that is beyond birth and death, that is your reality, and everybody else's reality. It is often through pain that you have access to it.

And here it's an easier way. But if pain is happening in your life at this time and coinciding with being here, that is wonderful. Life has given you this at this time.

The two come together. And that's beautiful. So anything you cannot accept externally and pain arises, or something, whatever arises as a feeling, accept.

Surrender to what you feel. Surrender to what is. If you can't, surrender to what you feel about that.

[Speaker 2] (2:48:17 - 2:49:16)

This concludes Living the Liberated Life and Dealing with the Pain Body with Eckhart Tolle. Music by Stephen McNamara. For further information on lectures and workshops with Eckhart Tolle, you may visit his website at www.eckharttolle.com.

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